

HOW DID MARILYN REALLY DIE?

Star exclusive from an astonishing new book about an old mystery



WAS IT BY HER OWN HAND AS THE OFFICIAL VERDICT SAID? OR WAS SHE KILLED BY ACCIDENT IN A DRAMA INVOLVING A DOCTOR AND BOBBY KENNEDY?

IT was early Sunday morning August 5, 1962, when the persistent ringing of the phone roused me. It was a little past five a.m. The caller was a close friend.

"Bob?" he began, "I've got some bad news." Then, "Marilyn's dead." That woke me up like a cold shower. There was only one Marilyn — Marilyn Monroe.

I hung up without even saying goodbye, then flipped on the television and poured myself a snifter of Courvoisier. An announcer said: "Authorities report that Marilyn Monroe died at 3:40 a.m. Pacific Daylight Time of an apparent overdose of barbiturates."

That was the story everyone was to come to believe. But, even at that time, a crazy thought crossed my mind.

Marilyn would never have committed suicide on a weekend. She was too publicity-conscious, too acutely aware of newspaper headlines.

Marilyn knew very well that the Sunday editions were always tight for space on breaking news because most of their columns were filled with features written in advance.

SHE ALSO knew that Sunday papers always went to bed around midnight.

No. Hell, she had too much to live for. I just couldn't accept Marilyn's death as a suicide.

And, as a result of my investigations over the next 12 years, I have become more convinced than ever that her death — and the many mysterious circumstances surrounding it — should be officially re-examined.

IT IS nearly 12 years since Marilyn Monroe was found dead from a massive dose of barbiturates. The official verdict was suicide. But others believe it may have been murder or accident. This week, in the first of a two-part series on Marilyn's tragic life and curious death, her close friend Robert Slatzer — pictured with her above — investigates the Monroe mystery.

By ROBERT F. SLATZER

The following questions must be answered:

- Did Marilyn kill herself — or did someone else inject her with barbiturates?
- What was the role of Bobby Kennedy in the affair?
- Did he visit her house just a few hours before she died?

Sergeant Jack Clemmons, the first policeman to reach the scene of Marilyn's death, told me later: "It appeared to me that the scene had been arranged. I felt that there was something that wasn't quite right."

Marilyn was lying face down on her bed. She was nude.

Clemmons said: "Marilyn did not

stretch out in any such fashion and die. She was put into that position after she died."

When I asked how he'd been able to tell that the body had been moved, he answered: "Marilyn was stretched out, face down."

"Her legs were completely parallel, and she looked just like what she was — a dead body that somebody had put into that position."

"I think I asked one of the doctors if anyone had moved her and he said: 'No. But I don't believe it.'"

ACCORDING TO Clemmons, from what he'd seen in previous investigations, a person who died from a drug overdose usually goes into convulsions and dies in a contorted position.

But the biggest mystery of all is how did the barbiturates that killed Marilyn get into her body.

Clemmons told me: "If you want to

get right down to the nitty gritty, it gets right down to the fact that she had a lethal dose of barbiturates in her bloodstream and that her digestive tract was clean.

"And when you get down to this fact, it needs explaining."

The autopsy on Marilyn was carried out by Dr. Thomas Noguchi, then Los Angeles deputy medical examiner.

HE REPORTED that Marilyn had died of an overdose of sleeping capsules — approximately 40 to 50 capsules.

But no trace of barbiturates was found in her stomach.

Dr. Noguchi had been criticized for not noting any needle marks on Marilyn's body, when it is a matter of record that Marilyn's physician, Dr. Hyman Engleberg, gave her injections on August 1 and 3, 1962.

If these marks were missed, isn't it possible that there were other, more recent marks, which were also overlooked? Marks that might have been made the day Marilyn died?

On Friday, August 4, 1972, the day prior to the official tenth anniversary of Marilyn Monroe's death, a Los Angeles newspaper reported that I was writing a book contending that Marilyn might have been murdered.

AT 11:30 A.M. that same day — hardly more than an hour after the paper was on the street — I received a call from a man who identified himself as Jack Quinn. He told me he had some

QUESTIONS THAT WERE NEVER ANSWERED

Pages 16 and 17

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CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

information I'd be sure to find interesting. He then established his credibility and convinced me that his motives were sincere.

The following questions and answers are excerpts from our phone conversation, which I was permitted to record.

QUINN: You're right about the coroner's inadequate investigation, and you're right about the injections, because there were 723 pages in the original report in the investigation into her death, and they've been boiled down to 54 pages for placement on microfilm.

D ID YOU see photographs of her... the coroner's photographs taken in her bedroom?

SLATZER: No. **QUINN:** She had bruises on her, but they were edited out of the final report. I saw the reports from the intelligence units — from the sheriff's and police intelligence units.

We were supposed to destroy a lot of their original records and condense everything into a neat package for micro-filming.

SLATZER: So what do you make of it?

QUINN: The bruises? I don't know what they mean.

SLATZER: What bruises?

QUINN: Under her armpit... The injection was in the artery under the armpit... a very small pinprick under the armpit.

SLATZER: What else?

QUINN: Did you know she had been Bobby Kennedy a couple of days before that? And not only that, but so did Peter Lawford.

B OBBY WENT to the house to see her... that's what the police record says. I also got it from the record that Bobby went to see her on the last Saturday. What happened, as it's put in the report, is that — and I'm taking it out of context, although I only looked at the report a little while ago — Marilyn was supposedly bugging John F....

SLATZER: John F?

QUINN: Yeah, that's right. At least that's what I got out of the report. You know, the police got it from Bobby, who said that he went down to talk to Marilyn on that Saturday. That was in the report. And there was some talk about a divorce action by Jackie, which Jack was trying to squelch.

But what happened, anyway, according to what was in the report, is that Bobby came out here, and he went to Marilyn's.

That was after he got a call from her at Peter Lawford's house. Now, the day before, when she was supposed to have been hysterical — I guess it was sometime in the late afternoon — she was saying how she was going to phone the newspapers and she was

going to do that... And so what happened was that they went out there... I mean Bobby and some physician. He's the guy who gave her the injection to quiet her down.

SLATZER: What did the doctor hit her with?

QUINN: Pentobarbital... right in the armpit.

SLATZER: Is this the record you have from the police?

QUINN: Right. But none of it has become a matter of public record. Do you know that the whole record ran 723 pages and they boiled it down to 54? Now, I ask you, isn't there something fishy there?

SLATZER: Sure is. What else did you spot to make you suspicious?

QUINN: Well, did you know that they ran a spinal tap on Marilyn?

SLATZER: No.

QUINN: Yeah, they did... One of the queer things about the Marilyn Monroe case was how the original folder from the autopsy report happened to get lost... And then the two physicians — one of them from General Hospital and the other one who was helping out on the autopsy — had to say how the file was misplaced.

T HEN THEY had to sit down something like 24 to 36 hours later and from memory make it up all over again.

SLATZER: So the existing file is from memory?

QUINN: No, they found the original again... and all that stuff about the two Kennedy brothers was all taken out of that one.

SLATZER: Any idea why?

QUINN: Because of the position of the Kennedy family. Actually he didn't lie. He just didn't tell the truth.

SLATZER: Who?

QUINN: Bobby. When he gave his statement to the police.

SLATZER: He clouded it, in other words.

QUINN: Yeah.

SLATZER: But everything's on the microfilm in its original form — right?

QUINN: Well, you can petition the city for a hundred years, and they're going to deny it exists. And what they'll probably release is the 54 pages.

SLATZER: Is all the recording on one microfilm?

QUINN: No, it's on two.

Later I met Quinn in an L.A. restaurant. I was accompanied by a friend, cinematographer Wilson S. Hong, whom I wanted to witness my conversation.

T HE MOST startling bit of intelligence that Quinn imparted to me was the statement reportedly made by Bobby Kennedy to the Los Angeles Police Department.

"Bobby said that he'd come to L.A. on Saturday August 4, 1962 (the day before Marilyn died) to award the Kennedy Cup at Angel's Park for the first Tri-International Soccer Match among Canada, Mex-



A face in the crowd... and such a face

Picture By Stan Hall

ico, and the United States," Quinn told me.

"From what I saw in the deposition, it said that there was almost a divorce pending with Jackie and JFK."

"Wasn't anything said about Bobby's having an affair with Marilyn?" I asked. Marilyn had confided to me about her romance with RFK.

"No," Quinn said. "All Bobby said was that JFK was supposed to have been involved with Marilyn and that JFK had dispatched him to come out here and talk to Marilyn because JFK was getting a lot of phone calls from Marilyn and was afraid of the embarrassment it might cause him."

"Bobby also said that his brother was having wife problems because of Marilyn's calls to the White House. All of this was in Bobby Kennedy's deposition."

Suddenly, I began to wonder. Was Bobby — who, I knew, had been having an affair with Marilyn — trying to shift the blame to his brother? The plot seemed to thicken.

Then the pieces began to fall into place when Quinn told me: "Bobby also said in his deposition that he and Peter

Lawford went to Marilyn's house late in the afternoon of August 4.

"There was a violent argument, and Marilyn was grabbed by Bobby and thrown to the floor. Then she was given an injection of pentobarbital in her armpit, which settled her down."

"Does the record show that one of them injected Marilyn with the drug?" I asked.

"No," Quinn said. "One of them called for a doctor to come over and give Marilyn the injection."

"What doctor?" I asked.

Q UINN REPLIED: "I don't remember his name. All I can tell you is that Kennedy's deposition shows that Marilyn went into a tantrum and that she was screaming: 'I'm tired of this whole thing, of being a plaything.'"

"Bobby said that Marilyn complained that she was called over to Lawford's house at times when they had prostitutes there and that she was tired of the whole mess."

The information Quinn volunteered may not be completely accurate, but he seem-

ed to know far more about this case than did other informants who contacted me.

I am now convinced of the authenticity of his statement, although I do not believe that Quinn is his real name.

But I knew for a fact that RFK was having an affair with Marilyn. She told me just a few weeks before she died.

"Bobby Kennedy promised to marry me," she said. "What do you think of that?"

I had admonished her in the past that it would be a mistake to get involved with RFK.

I knew that it was ridiculous for Marilyn to think that Bobby would jeopardize his political career by divorcing his wife, abandoning their eight children, facing the threat of excommunication from the Roman Catholic Church, and disgracing the President of the United States and the Kennedy family name as well.

Then a few weeks before she died, I went down to the beach with Marilyn.

"I brought you a present," Marilyn said, handing me a shopping bag.

I took it from her and pulled

out several manila envelopes filled with photographs and transparencies of her. I held a few up to the fading light and noted large red crosses drawn across them.

"I thought you might want them," Marilyn offered. "They're studio publicity pictures I killed. Maybe you'd like to use some of them in the book you're going to write about me someday. To show how bad my profile really looks."

I JUST SMILED and put the photos away.

Marilyn then dug into her handbag and began rummaging through it. She burrowed to the bottom and came up with a small book with a red cover.

"What is it?" I asked as Marilyn handed it to me.

"It's my diary," she answered. "I want you to look through it."

The diary wasn't a day-to-day log, but a record of the highlights of Marilyn's recent activities.

Though I knew about a lot of the material, I was startled to find certain things she had

WHAT SECRET TAPES REVEALED ABOUT RFK



That famous picture in 1954 when Marilyn was making *The Seven Year Itch*

written, especially about Bobby Kennedy. Most of the entries were eye-openers.

I was particularly interested in one entry in Marilyn's diary, one that might also be of interest to the former Teamsters' Union president: "Bobby told me today, 'I want to put that S.O.B. Jimmy Hoffa into jail, no matter how I do it.'"

"Do you know who Jimmy Hoffa is?" I asked Marilyn.

"Doesn't he have ... something to do with unions?" Marilyn said hesitantly.

I told her that Hoffa had quite a bit to do with unions.

She nodded, a slightly confused look on her face.

KENNEDY never did put Hoffa behind bars. His successor in the Justice Department, Nicholas de B. Katzenbach, reaped the fruits of the FBI investigation of Hoffa — but only after Bobby had left the department to run for the office of United States senator from New York.

I think it is very significant that RFK himself never pre-

ed the prosecution with the same vigor he had exhibited at the start of the investigation.

Perhaps he found out Hoffa knew about him and Marilyn. That would surely have made Bobby change his tactics.

It is a fact that Bobby had tried to stop Hoffa's investigation of him. It happened in a parked car in Nashville, Tenn., where the attorney general met with Hoffa's prober, noted wiretap expert Bernard Spindel, of New York.

"Robert Kennedy tried to get my husband to change sides," Spindel's widow told a close source of mine.

In 1964, Manhattan District Attorney Frank S. Hogan's detectives staged a nine-hour raid on Spindel's house in Holmes, N.Y., and seized his files and tapes.

Spindel later claimed in court that some of the seized material contained "tapes and evidence concerning the circumstances surrounding the causes of death of Marilyn Monroe, which strongly suggests that the officially reported circumstances of her demise were erroneous."

Among the tapes were those

from Spindel's wiretaps of RFK. Those tapes revealed Bobby Kennedy's friendship with Marilyn.

But even more important, they contained a most significant line uttered on a telephone early Sunday morning August 5, 1962, a time when Marilyn Monroe had already been found dead, though word of her tragic end had not yet been reported to the police.

THE WORDS were: "Is she dead yet?"

They came from a San Francisco location and were spoken to a party in the West Los Angeles area.

Bernard Spindel insisted that he had made no mistake in his pickup, for he had personally directed the installation of the bugging device. How valuable that piece of tape might be.

Mrs. Spindel told my source that she believes her husband placed the bugging device in Marilyn's home, hoping to uncover information that would embarrass RFK.

One question looms larger than ever at this time: Why did it take an eight-man team

'Perhaps he found out what Hoffa knew about him and Marilyn'

of state police and prosecutor's detectives nine hours to conduct the search of Spindel's house?

Mrs. Spindel claims that she had positive proof from conversations among the police who had raided her residence that among the things they were looking for were her husband's files on Marilyn Monroe and Bobby Kennedy.

What proof does she have?

A TAPE recording of the raid itself. It was probably the first bugged police raid in the unique history of wiretapping.

Spindel had set a hidden tape recorder in motion when the raiders arrived, and the listening devices picked up virtually every word the raiders spoke during the first hours of their search. The tape definitely indicates that the searchers were after the material on Bobby and Marilyn.

It reveals an extremely interesting remark made by one of the raiding officers: "What does the Marilyn Monroe case have to do with the indictment?"

The searchers seized not only the tape of the all-important phone call made from San Francisco early Sunday morning of August 5, but a recording of the conversation between Bobby and Spindel in the car in Nashville. The wiretapper even had his own car bugged.

Attorney Hogan's raiders seized both.

MRS. SPINDEL also told my source that her husband had evidence proving that certain Los Angeles Police Department officials attempted to cover up the circumstances surrounding Marilyn's death.

Among other things, she knows for a fact that Marilyn's files were rifled after her death.

Marilyn's romance with RFK was doomed not to last. The end came with a brutal clout when Bobby changed his private number so that Marilyn could no longer get in touch with him.

He had obviously become aware that their secret rendezvous had caused more than a groundswell of

whispers and was in fact the focus of an investigation being conducted by Bernard Spindel.

Marilyn was devastated by Bobby's rejection at a time when her movie career had taken an unexpected turn for the worse.

She contemplated calling a Press conference and revealing everything about her relationship with Bobby. I've never believed that Marilyn really intended to go through with it, for she was not a vindictive person. But she was desperate.

She had suddenly found herself completely cut off from RFK. She was extremely sensitive to rejection and was always terribly hurt when people she trusted let her down.

SHE JUST couldn't accept the fact that she was a "woman scorned."

She finally made a series of last-resort calls to the Justice Department, leaving urgent messages that she had to speak to Bobby. Even then Bobby failed to return her calls.

I believe that Bobby's itinerary on the fateful weekend of Marilyn's death is of tremendous interest and relevance.

According to the records and the people I've interviewed, he was in California at that time on a tour of the Northwest.

He checked into the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco, on Friday, August 3, 1962. That day the San Francisco newspaper ran stories of his arrival with his wife, Ethel, and a few of their children.

AND I KNOW for a fact that he was registered at the Beverly Hills Hotel in L.A. on Saturday, August 4.

He checked out late Saturday afternoon and went to the Santa Monica home of his sister Patricia and brother-in-law Peter Lawford and was back in San Francisco by the next day.

By that time, Marilyn was already dead. When interviewed by reporters RFK refused to make a statement about her death. Peter Lawford has

since denied that Bobby Kennedy was in California that weekend.

But several women visiting one of Marilyn's neighbors on Saturday afternoon, August 4, tell a story that seems to support my findings — and Quinn's allegations.

They had gathered for a card party at a house on Fifth Helena Drive, near Marilyn's residence. Looking out the window, they observed a handsome man with a beaked nose, accompanied by another man, a stranger to all but their hostess. They all recognized the first man because he was Robert Kennedy.

THE REASON the lady of the house recognized the man with Kennedy was that she had seen him visit Marilyn's house on numerous other occasions. He was, in fact, a regular visitor.

The woman didn't know what his exact calling was, but she surmised that he was a medical man because he always carried a small black valise, the kind used by doctors on house calls.

No inquest was ever held on Marilyn. It was accepted that she committed suicide and no further investigation was held.

Perhaps the strongest reason for reopening the case is the unsatisfactory nature of the medical evidence.

Two leading doctors who examined this evidence told me that they did not believe a suicide verdict was justified.

DR. SIDNEY S. Weinberg, chief medical examiner of New York's Suffolk County, says the evidence suggests that the barbiturates were introduced either by injection or with a suppository. "In my opinion," he said, "it is unlikely that anyone could allegedly take 47 capsules of barbiturates without having a trace of barbiturates in the stomach or the first part of the small intestine."

Another voice to substantiate this is E. Forest Chapman, M.D., of Belleville, Mich., a medical examiner thoroughly experienced in autopsy procedures.

After carefully reviewing Marilyn Monroe's autopsy report, Dr. Chapman said: "The autopsy findings furnish high suspicion, if not proof, of conspiracy to murder and murder itself."

Was Marilyn's death a homicide? I say it's time we found out!

Adapted by Phil Burton from *The Life and Curious Death of Marilyn Monroe* by Robert F. Slatzer, published by Pantheon House at \$9.95.

NEXT WEEK: MARILYN'S TWO-DAY MARRIAGE